DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 404 934 HE 029 949

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|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Singleton, Sharon E.; And Others |
| TITLE | Faculty Service Enclaves: A Summary Report. |
| INSTITUTION | Massachusetts Univ., Boston. New England Resource Center for Higher Education. |
| PUB DATE | Feb 97 |
| NOTE | 20p. |
| PUB TYPE | Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC01 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | Change Agents; *College Role; Colleges; Higher Education; *Institutional Characteristics; Institutional Mission; Organizational Change; *Outreach Programs; Program Descriptions; *Public Service; School Community Relationship; Universities |
| IDENTIFIERS | *Faculty Service; New England |

ABSTRACT

This study examined faculty service at colleges and universities in New England to determine the characteristics of service enclaves on campus. Interviews were conducted with faculty and administrators at Bentley College, Lesley College, Salem State College, and the University of Massachusetts-Boston in Massachusetts; Trinity College and the University of Hartford in Connecticut; and Providence College in Rhode Island. It was found that service groups took the form of schools and colleges (such as those involved in education or health), centers or institutes with a specific outreach mission, individual departments, and institutional partnerships with a school system or municipality. Service enclaves shared characteristics that enabled them to be functional, vital, and tied to the stated mission of the college or university in ways that distinguished them from individual, isolated service initiatives. These characteristics included leadership, flexibility, institutional support, consistency with institutional mission and culture, integration with research and teaching, and visibility. It is concluded that colleges and universities can use service enclaves as a mechanism for grassroots institutional change, and that highly institutionalized service enclaves had a marked effect on the service culture of their institution. (MDM)

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# NERCHE OUTREACH

Graduate College of Education University of Massachusetts • Boston

## Faculty Service Enclaves: A Summary Report

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February, 1997

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## Introduction

In 1995, the New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE) sent a questionnaire to every college and university in New England asking about the structures supporting faculty professional service. We defined faculty professional service as: *work based on the faculty member's knowledge and expertise that contributes to the outreach mission of the institution.* Important elements of this type of service are that:

- faculty, as representatives of the institution, use their capacities as experts in certain fields.
- the work benefits an entity outside the institution.
- it should contribute to a faculty member's teaching and research.
- the products resulting from professional service will be public, not proprietary, and will be available and shared.

The Program on Faculty Professional Service and Academic Outreach has three projects: the Faculty Professional Service Project, that seeks to increase the capacity of colleges and universities to support service; Project Colleague, that helps faculty develop the skills necessary to initiate and sustain service projects; and the Portfolio Project, on documenting and evaluating faculty service work.

Of the 120 colleges and universities that responded, 73 percent reported that outreach is a stated part of the institutional mission and that faculty and administrators support the mission. Almost all the institutions said that individual faculty service initiatives are encouraged and represent the most common outreach activity on campus. Of these campuses, however, only 31 percent reported that specific criteria are used to document and evaluate service in promotion and tenure decisions, while even fewer (20 percent ) reported that service is weighed seriously in these decisions. The sheer volume of reported service activities is the good news, while the lack of institutional commitment to service in the form of structures and policies is somewhat troubling. Our study focused on a small number of universities and colleges that appeared to provide support for faculty professional service.

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Sites

From information collected in follow-up phone interviews with twenty campuses, we selected seven institutions representing liberals arts, comprehensives, and research institutions, to visit for more detailed attention: Bentley College, Lesley College, Salem State College and University of Massachusetts Boston in Massachusetts, Trinity College and the University of Hartford in Connecticut, and Providence College in Rhode Island. Chief academic officers, deans, department chairs, faculty, directors of centers and institutes, and heads of service learning programs were interviewed.

Given the positive portrayal of service in mission statements, strategic plans, and presidential initiatives, we expected to find "model" institutions -- those with clear service orientations or cultures. Instead, we found an enormous amount of collective activity: groups of faculty and staff working together on service initiatives in the community. Unlike isolated and often invisible individual faculty initiatives, these service groups were visible.

The service groups took several forms: schools and colleges, such as those involved in education or health; centers or institutes, with a specific outreach mission; departments, such as applied social sciences; and partnerships, such as an institutional partnership with a school system or municipality.

Where there was a high level of institutional commitment to service, these groups thrived in productive collaborations with the external community. However, at other institutions where those conditions did not prevail, service groups found themselves struggling for resources and support as they simultaneously carried out service projects. We call these groups *service enclaves*, a notion that captures both the protected conditions necessary for the development of ideas as well as the isolation of groups that exist in indifferent and sometimes hostile environments.

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It is important to emphasize that when we refer to existing and -more or less- permanent academic structures, such as schools, colleges, and departments as enclaves, we are talking about the status of their service work and not their teaching or research activities. This is because service on most campuses continues to be marginalized and not central to the institution's definition of itself as a research and teaching institution. As one of our respondents put it, "service is not the frosting on the cake. It is the sprinkles on the frosting."

Service Enclaves

We make a distinction between the existence of *service enclaves* and a *service culture*. *Service enclaves* exist when there is an articulated institutional commitment to service but institutional involvement with service activities is unplanned and haphazard. This is demonstrated by symbolic support, physical resources, but little attention to the inclusion of service in policies and rewards. These service units support the outreach activities of the faculty within them, but are marginalized within the institution because of their emphasis on service.

A *service culture* is characterized by a general commitment to service, demonstrated by the language and actions of top level administrators, campus culture, reward structures, and level of institutional support. The work of these service units is the strategic expression of the institution's service mission. While we did not find a model campus, we found a few institutions that approximated a service culture.

Ideally, a campus with an expressed commitment to service would work toward developing a service culture. The work of the academy is mediated through a variety of different institutional cultures, from traditional liberal arts colleges to research institutions to urban comprehensives. While these cultures are not immutable, they do respond to change in ways that reflect their values and beliefs. Change in any institution is a gradual process, and there is no

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recipe for making faculty professional service a more significant priority in colleges and universities. But a culture that embraces service to varying degrees can happen gradually and incrementally. It is in this way that service enclaves can be a powerful force for grassroots change. In our research we have indications that service enclaves -- if there are enough of them and if they are deliberate about collaborating with other units in the institution -- have the potential to move a campus to a service culture.

As we examined these service enclaves, we found that while they took on distinct configurations, they all functioned with a high degree of collaboration among the individuals involved. They also shared characteristics that enabled them to be functional, vital and tied to the stated mission of the college or university in ways that distinguished them from individual, isolated service initiatives. These characteristics are: leadership, flexibility, institutional support, consistency with institutional mission and culture, integration with research and teaching, and visibility.

## Characteristics

### Leadership

One of the important characteristics of the enclaves we studied was the role of three different types of leadership at various institutional levels. Each type of leadership contributed to the success of the enclave's ability to thrive and become part of the institutional fabric. We found these leadership types at the project, unit and institutional levels. At each level a different leadership type was required in order to form, sustain and institutionalize the enclave, namely: *entrepreneurial*, *advocacy*, and *symbolic*. In many cases, these types are carried out by the same individual or individuals.

First is **entrepreneurial leadership**, necessary to initiate and carry out a service initiative. This most often occurs at the project level. For example, the

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chair of the Law Department at Bentley College approached the Attorney General's office with an idea for a student-run consumer action line that would provide the community with ways to deal with problems with area businesses while providing a professional learning setting for students with training in mediation.

Second is **advocacy leadership,** most often occurring at the unit level from a Director, Dean, or Department Chair. These leaders provide resources to support and encourage faculty service, support those faculty involved in professional service, and connect the service to the institutional mission and reward system. As many of the faculty interviewed at the University of Hartford emphasized, while there is global support for service from the central administration, where the "rubber hits the road" is with their respective deans.

A strong example of the advocate is the Dean of Education, Nursing and Health Professions (ENHP) at the University of Hartford, who serves as the common thread for many varied programs within the college. His personal commitment is evident in the number of service activities that are run out of his office. While this has precipitated exponential growth in the number of service activities within the college over the past five years, there is the awareness that in order for the projects to continue to thrive, there must be shared responsibility among the faculty. To this end, the Dean recently created the Office of Community Involvement to link community initiatives and make connections to each of the school's divisions, and a Coordinating Council made up of division chairs and representatives from all involved in service projects. In a traditional research setting, advocates play an especially important role. At Trinity College, the Dean and the Chair of the Sociology Department have supported the community-based scholarship of one of the faculty, a "unique case" in the words of that faculty member.

Finally, **symbolic leadership** at the institutional level by a president or provost shapes the institutional culture as one that is supportive of and committed to faculty service and outreach. One Institute Director noted that

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symbolic leadership is the most important of the three, saying: "It makes a lot of difference what a president and provost say and do regarding service." Symbolic leadership from the central administration was seen as critical to both broadening the concept of what constitutes scholarship and conveying the seriousness with which the institution regards service.

At the University of Hartford, President Humphrey Tonkin has worked to develop his image of the institution as literally the "university of Hartford." In addition to a one-half tuition program for Hartford public school graduates, he has personally initiated a number of projects to serve the community. His commitment to service is shared by the Provost who developed a centralized fund to support service and is modifying promotion and tenure standards with service explicitly identified as a criterion for promotion.

At Trinity College, President Evan Dobelle tied his strategic plan for reinvigorating the college to the revitalization of the deteriorating surrounding urban community. He developed a neighborhood revitalization plan designed to transform and renovate fifteen surrounding blocks into an educational and residential community.

## Flexibility

Flexibility is critical to the functioning of a service enclave. Often community needs arise suddenly and require creativity, innovation, collaboration and quick response time (Lynton, 1996). For example, the Center for Peaceable Schools at Lesley College began as a faculty response to requests from public school teachers for assistance with a specific problem: how to deal with children's distress at the media coverage of the Gulf War. Two Lesley faculty members with expertise in early childhood education immediately set up a hotline to help teachers. To address the immediate issue of the Gulf War and the broader issue of violence in our society, these faculty invited other teachers and community activists to collaborate on projects using nonviolent conflict resolution

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skills. In a similar way, an administrator and two deans at Salem State College, after talking with a representative from industry and the superintendent of schools at a national conference they were all attending, seized the opportunity to jointly plan and develop an innovative, year-round, K-5 school with strong teacher input.

Funding for all of these enclaves is not guaranteed, making necessary creative approaches to obtaining and deploying resources (Driscoll & Lynton, 1996). In a sociology department at one site, faculty members were able to pay for graduate assistants for their project. With graduate assistants come office space, which they were then able to use as a project office.

While these groups are actively bringing faculty expertise to communities beyond their institutions, they often do so in the un-supportive climate of their host institutions. Where institutional support is minimal, service enclaves often experience a profound sense of impermanence as faculty and staff must devote considerable time to garnering resources. This underscores the necessity for entrepreneurial leadership to locate funding sources and write grants, an increasingly difficult endeavor in a world of shrinking financial resources.

## Institutional Support

Institutional support plays is a critical measure of an institution's investment in service. In order for service-enclaves to function at all, a minimum threshold of institutional support is necessary. Those that receive greater support are less encumbered by the constant pursuit of resources that siphons time away from the work of the project. In an era of institutional cutbacks, one could argue that allocating precious resources to these enclaves would be unwise. But because cutbacks are inspired in part by public demands for accountability and higher education's failure to observe its obligation to the external community (Hackney, 1994), the value of public service is clear. A service project, such as an evaluation of the delivery of services to the homeless, provides needed

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assistance to the community as well as educational experiences for students and research possibilities for faculty. In addition, these projects "represent the institution well" as one respondent observed, meaning that the institution receives good publicity. Institutional support for service, including meaningful rewards for faculty engaging in service, not only demonstrates a conspicuous commitment to this important work and all of its constituents, but works to promote the institution's self interest.

Support can range from the provision of office space and student assistants to operational support; from released time or seed money to clearly defined criteria for service in promotion, tenure and review guidelines. Enclaves situated in institutions with palpable service cultures and strong leadership are more likely to receive significant and long-term institutional support. The Center for Peaceable Schools' continued successes with both its programs and funding efforts resulted in increased presidential commitment and operational support.

Sometimes support is found at the unit level, such as a school or college. In ENHP at the University of Hartford, the Dean created a number of structures that reflect his belief that service is a valuable part of the scholarly process, including revised promotion and tenure standards which specify "substantial activity in service and scholarship." In addition to these structures, there is also seed money for faculty who undertake service projects and the potential of instituting released time.

Even among some of the more well endowed service enclaves, issues of scarce resources consumed a significant amount of staff time. As the Dean of ENHP noted about one of their programs, "[w]e have to scramble now to maintain this," as it is difficult to move beyond grants that are seed money. At another site, the director of a center with a national reputation developed over 20 years of work, reported that he had to continue to fight for institutional money for staff as well as for office space.

Enclaves receiving institutional money to support staff and programs are sometimes resented by other campus members who worry about the allocation

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of resources. One center director laid some of the responsibility at the door of the centers themselves, observing that campus members "don't have sufficient information about institutes' and centers' roles and contributions to the community."

Institutions, too, will have to be creative in the ways in which they make their commitment to service conspicuous -- so as to avoid or minimize resentment from resource-poor departments and units. Combining the financing of enclaves with other institutional areas is one way. Where enclaves overlap with departmental focuses -- in teaching and research, for example -- combined resources, as well as information sharing and expertise can be beneficial to all involved. The Engineering Applications Center at the University of Hartford combines the functions of an academic unit, generating numerous research opportunities for faculty and students, with several other capacities. Through contracts with industry, it creates employment opportunities for faculty and students and generates money to cover the Center's operating costs, support student research, and update equipment. While difficult to quantify, the Center creates contacts with industry that are helpful to institutional development efforts. The Center's activities overlap with those of other colleges within the university, providing opportunities for collaboration.

## Mission and Culture

The congruence between the work of the enclave and unit or institutional mission is an important variable for supporting, encouraging and rewarding faculty work in the community. At Lesley College, originally established as a teacher training institution, the culture is compatible with community service. One Lesley respondent noted that "there is more emphasis on service and teaching than on research," because of the mission of the school. "Students see professors putting their ideas into action and trying them out with real teachers

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in schools." Another respondent characterized the culture of service as deriving from the "grassroots." Faculty have "the mindset of being in the community."

While we found examples of good fits between service and institutional culture, some others were less comfortable. At one center that was awarded an impressive grant to develop an institute based on service and service learning, respondents spoke of feeling ghettoized within the college, viewed suspiciously by other members of a campus where the service is understood as an expression of virtue that is demeaned by public recognition. The center, in spite of the culture of the university, is making inroads, actively reaching out by offering faculty development seminars and workshops.

Most sites were less extreme, with service being carried out by some centers, institutes, schools, and departments, representing different benchmarks on the continuum of a service *culture*. However, there are problems of situating the service work within a defined place rather than diffusing it throughout the institution. At one of the sites we visited, the service mission of the institution was carried out through specific institutes and schools, all of which were either marginalized from the academic mission of the institution or viewed with suspicion as consumers of valuable resources. Similarly, top down efforts to re-focus an institutional mission to emphasize service can be thwarted by a long-established culture of research with which faculty identify.

We came across an interesting phenomenon in our research -- something that is echoed in Ernest Lynton's work on documenting service in the Portfolio Project: Even in institutions where a lot of service activity takes place, there is a kind of "counterculture mindset" on the part of those doing service that pits the service enclaves against the perceived culture of the host institution.[1] Sometimes service groups see themselves as renegades. Anecdotal data in all of the projects in the Program on Faculty Professional and Academic Outreach suggests that within the context of service, there is an association between marginality and doing creative, flexible work. This raises an issue for institutions

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wishing to institutionalize service: how will this kind of faculty work continue if it is seen as "of the culture" rather than against it?

Integration with Teaching and Research

What needs to be made very clear, if institutions are going to free scarce resources for faculty service, is the *academic value* of the work. Our research produced numerous examples of the intrinsic relationship between service and scholarship, from guiding research endeavors to creating academic programs. A distinguishing characteristic of all service enclaves was the ability of participating faculty to articulate the relationship between their service activities and their teaching and research. It is the links to teaching and research that tie service to the mission of the institution.

Faculty in the College of Public and Community Service (CPCS) at the University of Massachusetts Boston are obliged to connect their research to the school's community outreach mission. A respondent underscored the connection between faculty scholarship and service with this comment: "Our expertise is only good if we can make it available to the community and see the community as part of the process." One faculty member talked about how her collaborative work with public school students affords her the opportunity to both enrich her research and, in turn, inform her teaching about adolescent development. As she put it , "you are able to live it as well as study it, and students can test out models and theories that you present in class." Service offers multifaceted benefits: it helps to "break open new territory by pushing the envelope of scholarly study, teaching students, while providing service to the community." In the culture of CPCS, service is not an adjunct to scholarship and teaching. In fact, in the best sense, teaching, research and service are deeply intertwined. Service engenders teaching which, in turn, engenders research and more service. One faculty member noted that her institution's culture is very "cerebrally-oriented," but service "for some older faculty, [promotes] the concept

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that education should have consequences which are practical and applicable, [and] introduces new ways of thinking regarding the scholarly process."

A faculty member in the Sociology Department at Trinity College talked about how his service activity had transformed his teaching: "It has enriched my understanding of topics in sociology that I teach about and has improved the way I can teach students. It allows me to get students to understand civic responsibility, stereotyping, etc. Service has allowed me to see another text, the lived experiences of the people we are serving."

The Engineering Applications Center at the University of Hartford provides faculty with countless opportunities to publish their findings and serves as a catalyst for additional research and future publications. It also generates up to 60 percent of the "senior capstone design courses" for students, as well as opportunities for students and faculty to present and share their research findings with the rest of the engineering school.

At the Center for Peaceable Schools to Lesley College, the service work of faculty and staff has found its logical outcome in the development of a Masters of Education in Conflict Resolution and Peaceable Schools, which will train students as teachers and equip them with skills in school-based conflict resolution and peacemaking. In addition, faculty involved in the Center are able to pursue their research interests in such areas as media violence and multi-cultural education through the Center's work.

Not every service enclave is a channel for faculty work. In enclaves such as institutes or centers that employ staff to carry out much of the service work, it is sometimes difficult to get many faculty involved. One institute director is working hard to involve more faculty, noting that most of the activity within institutes is not initiated by faculty. He is concerned that the talent that has been mobilized to deal with problems hasn't always been faculty talent, citing the tension between the needs of the practitioner and the scholar as a problem. The practitioner may need an answer to a problem this week, but academics work on a different timetable. On the other hand, he added that although it's difficult for

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centers to get involved in the governance of the university, they offer possibilities for changing the faculty reward system by presenting alternative ways to engage in scholarship.

The relationship between service and research is thorny because of the privileged position that traditional research holds in the academy and its importance as a measure of faculty performance. In general, service initiatives are considered valuable to a faculty career as long as they are clearly related to research and generate publications. Faculty trying to combine their service with research confront a number of obstacles, including time, the research tradition, documentation and rewards. While faculty at one center are writing about pedagogy, the impact of service on students, on curriculum and on their own work, this "action research" -- which is often not valued and is enormously time-consuming -- does not often result in publications in mainstream refereed journals. At another institution with a strong traditional research tradition, faculty, who wish to do action research related to their service activities, are concerned about how such research would be evaluated in their tenure and promotion decisions. Salem State College addresses this by defining scholarship more broadly and accepts action research in its review process.

Another untenured faculty member discussed developing a series of training workshops for public school faculty. The workshops "did not count much with the promotion and tenure committee, but it did pay off with regard to professional papers that were generated as a result." She summarized, "People are suspicious of community service because it is a time eater. But it is the community where my ideas come from. Service is fine as long as you get publications out of it."

One respondent pointed out an additional dilemma, noting that "service can invigorate teaching and lead people down new avenues of research," but can be a "diversion," from doing good research: if faculty get too caught up in the "nitty gritty" of the service work and lose sight of the larger, generalizable concepts.

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This is where the role of good documentation and evaluation of service is critical.

One of the main reasons why the link between scholarship and service is weak is that there are no systematic ways for documenting service activities. Ernest Lynton is working with faculty to develop ways to capture the scholarly rigor of service activities to demonstrate that service work can be scholarship.

Colleges and universities are gradually shifting their priorities to acknowledge and reward faculty professional service (O'Meara, 1997). Impetus for change can come from individuals, such as is the case at ENHP at the University of Hartford.

## Visibility

For service enclaves to become part of their institutions, they must be deliberate about reaching out to the institutional community. Fiscal uncertainty is felt in virtually every college and university today, resulting in anxiety about job and program security. The fragmenting effects of this condition are experienced by service enclaves as well, especially since they often do not enjoy the same credibility as other academic programs. As a consequence, they often receive harsher scrutiny from campus members. This makes deliberate efforts at internal visibility all the more important. Many of the service enclaves generate newsletters and other publications aimed at in-house audiences; however, in an academic culture that marginalizes service, these publications often are overlooked. Achieving positive visibility on campus often requires a more diversified approach.

Frequently service enclaves provide direct services to their institutions. Each spring, the Center for Business Ethics at Bentley offers a program in which eight Bentley faculty receive training on how to incorporate ethics material into their courses. In addition, the Center holds annual conferences and workshops, and makes speakers available to Bentley classes.

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At the University of Hartford, ENHP has been deliberate about internal visibility, actively engaging in outreach to the campus community. They have gained support of the central administration, in part because they are innovative with cross-discipline collaborations and assessment, and they are successful at bringing in revenue. Noted the Dean, "Fifteen or twenty years ago, our programs would be held up as second class citizens. Now people don't feel like that....We're part of the system now."

Through its work with area businesses, often leading to patents and profit-making licenses, Hartford's Engineering Applications Center generates good publicity for the engineering school and university.

As one Institute Director noted, "centers and institutes (*service enclaves)* are not seen as central to the academic mission of his institution and there is some resentment about the resources they consume." He explained some of this resentment has resulted from centers and institutes doing inadequate public relations within the university. The faculty who employ his institute as an outlet for their service often do so because of the effects of informal networks. He emphasized the need to involve faculty in institute activity and demonstrate overlaps in activities.

## Conclusion

Institutions can use service enclaves as a mechanism for grassroots institutional change. Highly institutionalized service enclaves had a marked effect on the service culture of their institution. We saw evidence of this in the fact that other departments or colleges used the enclave as a model of how to better support faculty who engage in service; campus promotion and tenure guidelines were altered to consider service as a result of the work of faculty in the enclaves; and institutional strategic plans included mention of service as scholarship.

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There are several themes worth noting for those trying to move their institutional culture toward service. First is the necessity of taking an honest appraisal of where the institution sits with regard to service. Ernest Lynton's (1995) "Ten Questions for Departmental Discussion" provides an excellent overview of issues that institutions must address: types of outreach activities, congruency with the mission of the university or school, consistency of the service activity with notions about research and teaching, and measures or criteria for evaluating scholarship.

Second, once an assessment is made, deliberate steps must be taken to strengthen service enclaves. Institutions should develop strategic action plans which tie service to the mission through specific policies and initiatives, form committees to coordinate interdepartmental service initiatives, and create or expand institutes or centers. However, as plans are made to institutionalize service it is important for individual institutions to address the issue of how enclaves can retain their flexibility and autonomy without being encumbered by bureaucracy.

Third, faculty members, used to working in isolated and often invisible ways, may need support to develop collaborative skills, and time to be able to reflect and assess their work. Ways to make service work visible, include students, span disciplines, assist faculty and community partners in accessing university resources and make the link to other forms of scholarship are all areas deserving of institutional support.

Finally, we must emphasize again the importance of leadership. Among all of the characteristics of service enclaves -- leadership, flexibility, institutional support, relationship to the mission and culture, integration with research and teaching, and visibility -- it is leadership that emerges as critical to strengthening enclaves and building a service culture. Entrepreneurial leaders are needed to initiate service projects, symbolic leaders set the tone of the institution's culture by reminding the campus community that service is a valued part of the institution's mission, and advocates enable faculty to carry out this important

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work. It is when all of these elements are in place that an institution moves from service enclaves to a service culture.

[1] This is an issue in service learning as well. See Goodwin Liu's piece and responses to it in the *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 2(2), Fall 1995.

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